

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 0480

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, TU
SUBJECT: AUTHORIZING GROWTH OF BRACTEATUM POPPY IN THE U.S.

REF: (A) 76 BANGKOK 32086, (B) 76 ANKARA 8958, (C) ANKARA 169

1. AT MEETING ON JANUARY 17, 1977, EMBASSY NARCOTICS COMMITTEE NOTED THAT DEA PROPOSAL TO AUTHORIZE GROWTH OF PAPAVER BRACTEATUM IN THE UNITED STATES HAD NOW PROGRESSED TO POINT WHERE PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THIS PROPOSAL ARE TO BE HELD BEFORE AN ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE IN WASHINGTON ON JANUARY 27-28. THE COMMITTEE THOROUGHLY REVIEWED THE PROS AND CONS OF THE PROPOSAL BOTH IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INTERNATIONAL EFFORT WHICH THE USG IS MOUNTING TO SUPPRESS THE INTERNATIONAL ILLICIT TRAFFIC IN NARCOTICS AND (TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY HERE IN ANKARA) THE DOMESTIC INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES.

2. ON THE FOREIGN RELATIONS ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM, PARTICULARLY US-TURKISH RELATIONS, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT A DECISION TO GROW BRACTEATUM WILL IMPAIR EFFORTS BY THE USG AND THE UN TO PERSUADE THE TURKS TO LIMIT THEIR POPPY PRODUCTION AND TO MAINTAIN THEIR PRESENT EFFECTIVE (AND
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COSTLY FOR A POOR COUNTRY) CONTROL SYSTEM. WE WERE HEARTENED BY THE TURKISH MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE'S APPROACH TO US FOR ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE IN RESTRICTING POPPY CULTIVATION (REF C). AMONG OTHER THINGS, IT INDICATED THAT THE CONTINUING ADVICE TO LIMIT POPPY ACREAGE WHICH GOT HAS BEEN RECEIVING FROM USG AND UN HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY A KEY CABINET-LEVEL TURKISH OFFICIAL. FACT THAT US ITSELF IS GOING INTO THE

POPPY CULTIVATION BUSINESS WILL CERTAINLY NOT ENHANCE OUR CONTINUING ACREAGE LIMITATION EFFORT HERE.

3. ADMITTEDLY, WE HERE IN TURKEY ARE EXPERT ONLY ON THE US-TURKISH IMPLICATIONS OF SUCH A MOVE AND ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO WEIGH ALL OF THE US DOMESTIC INTERESTS INVOLVED IN THIS DECISION. FROM THIS DISTANCE, HOWEVER, IT DOES SEEM THAT THE DECISION TO GROW NARCOTICS-BEARING POPPIES IN THE UNITED STATES IS A CRITICAL WATERSHED DECISION, REVERSING A HIGHLY VALUABLE POLICY SUCCESSFULLY MAINTAINED BY OUR GOVERNMENT SINCE 1911. IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT THROUGH CONTROLS OVER THE IMPORT OF RAW MATERIALS FOR LICIT NARCOTICS AND CAREFUL CONTROLS OVER THEIR MANUFACTURE AND DISTRIBUTION IN THE UNITED STATES WE HAVE DEVELOPED A VIRTUALLY LEAK-PROOF SYSTEM FOR HANDLING LICIT NARCOTICS IN OUR COUNTRY. GIVEN OUR CONTINUING PROBLEMS WITH ILLICIT NARCOTICS, DOES IT REALLY MAKE SENSE TO CHANGE THIS NOW? MOREOVER, IF THE FACTS AND FUGURES ABOUT WORLD PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF LICIT NARCOTICS WHICH HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO US (AND WHICH WE HAVE USED IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE TURKS) ARE TRUE, IT WOULD BE HARD TO DEFEND A US DECISION TO GET INTO THE POPPY BUSINESS ON ECONOMIC GROUNDS. WE HAVE SEEN THE SOFTENING OF PRICES OFFERED FOR TURKISH POPPY STRAW AND COULD HARDLY MAINTAIN THE POSITION THAT PRESENT OR PROSPECTIVE SHORTAGES OF LICIT NARCOTICS ARE LOOMING UP OR THAT PRICES ARE INEXORABLY TENDING TO BE UNACCEPTABLY HIGH.

4. UNLESS THERE ARE CONTRARY AND SIGNIFICANT US NATIONAL CONFIDENTIAL

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INTERESTS IN THE SITUATION, WHICH FROM THIS DISTANCE WE DO NOT PRECEIVE, WE STRONGLY URGE THE DEPARTMENT TO CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO DISSUADE DEA FROM IMPLEMENTING ITS PROPOSAL TO AUTHORIZE THE GROWTH OF BRACTEATUM POPPIES IN THE U.S. MACOMBER

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